

Committee on Resources

Witness Testimony

Testimony on
the Effects of International Forestry Agreements
on Forest Service Decision Making
WILLIAM D. STRONG
Western Regional Director
Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council
Local 180 of the A.W.P.P.W.
Before the
House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
September 11, 1997

I would like to thank the committee for giving me the opportunity to speak on this subject.

My name is William Dee Strong. I live in Gig Harbor, Washington, and work in Steilacoom, Washington as a backtender on a paper machine. I've worked in wood products in some fashion for about twenty-three years. I started in a saw mill in Horseshoe Bend, Idaho.

Along with my regular job, I'm also the Western Director of the Pulp and Paperworkers Resource Council. The council represents over three hundred and fifty thousand pulp and paperworkers through out the United States. We work on issues that affect our jobs. This issue I feel could effect jobs all over the United States.

A few P.P.R.C. members were invited to a program in Winnipeg, Canada. There were representatives from twenty-six different countries, and over four hundred in attendance. We listened to different opinions on how bad our forest were, and how good they are managed. We sat through a pipe smoking event in a non-smoking hotel. A lot of people involved in forest issues in the United States were there and given an opportunity to speak. As the conference went on the main parts of the world being discussed were the Pacific Northwest Canada. And South America, it would seem to me if this program were looking for a world sustainable development program more of the world should bring something to the table. Not just offering my part of the world, where a lot of my brothers and sisters work and live, to all nations to manage.

It didn't take long to see this wasn't a program we needed our country to get involved in. The question was asked where is this information going? The answer, the United Nations. There weren't any scientific facts presented that I can remember, just opinions. For what purpose would this serve? No one puts on a program of this size and expense without some kind of results. A forest convention maybe?

Tom Isles of Brainard, Minnesota, Great Lakes Regional Director and I were invited to a symposium in Washington, D.C. earlier this year on sustainable development. Firmly believing that the more we communicated the sooner we would achieve the balance for job security and a multiple use forest. Some very good information was shared, but again labor wasn't at the bargaining table. We who have so much to lose. After making it very clear in our presentations that we need to be a part of the puzzle. We were then asked to be a part of what I call the Criteria and Indicator Program, or the Montreal Process. This program

came out of the Earth Summit, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

What is unique about this process is thirteen countries make up the working group. The countries cover over five continents and represent ninety percent of the world temperate and boreal forest and sixty percent of all the forests globally and forty five percent of the world trade of wood and wood products. Now there is something on the table.

The United States fulfilled its requirement for the process and is not required to do anymore. The best scientists and foresters in the world, the United States, put the facts together. The program was looked at and agreed upon by all the stake holders, environmental, industry, native americans, labor, and small land owners, before it was presented to the process in Korea.

The criteria, and indicator program asked for nothing but give a wealth of information that can and should be kept up to date. So we know our forest inventory in the United States. I believe this can be done through our Forest Service.

The committee should look at the first approximation report and consider its uses in the United States.

In closing I would like to thank Mary Coulombe, Kathrine Jesch, and Tim Meally for the work they had done in keeping a group as adverse as ours in focus, and producing an excellent tool.

We of labor in the northwest and throughout the United States have suffered dearly over timber issues. When a mill is shutdown be it a saw mill or papermill, think about the worker. It doesn't make any difference if you get paid by the hour or a salary, when the doors are closed we all leave together without our jobs.

Thank you for your time,

#